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RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHOND/DIRONDCP WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 001180

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/23/2015  
TAGS: [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: FIRST DEMOBILIZATIONS OF THE YEAR INCLUDE BIGGEST  
TO DATE

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood.  
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (C) On January 20, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) Mineros Bloc demobilized 2,789 of its members at a farm outside Taraza, Antioquia Department. This was the biggest single demobilization since the peace process began in late 2003 and the first time that representatives of the Prosecutor General's Office were present at a demobilization since August 2005. The debriefing or "version libre" was a longer version recommended by the Embassy, which consisted of 16 questions including: alias, knowledge of any major criminal actions by the group, illicit assets, and information on the location of hostages. (Note: the original "version libre" consisted of five basic questions.) Taraza residents, who live in an area known to be heavily involved in coca production, plan to incorporate crop substitution programs in rubber, cacao, and passion fruit. Residents are fearful of what the FARC might do once all the former paramilitaries reintegrate back into society. Taraza Mayor Reinaldo Posso recommended that the Army pay special attention because some reports indicated a guerrilla presence had already been detected in the area. An additional four blocs demobilized between January 20 and February 6, bringing the total to over 22,000. End Summary.

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2,789 MINEROS BLOC MEMBERS DEMOBILIZE  
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¶2. (C) On January 20, 2,789 Mineros Bloc members of the AUC demobilized at a farm outside of the town of Taraza, Antioquia Department. This was the biggest single demobilization since the peace process began in late 2003. According to GOC officials, AUC logistical and intelligence personnel demobilized, which inflated the numbers. There were also a large number of women, though the number has not been confirmed. According to Mineros Bloc and AUC leader Ramiro Vanoy Murillo, AKA "Cuco Vanoy," who also demobilized, his group surrendered a helicopter (license HK 4185), several vehicles, a large quantity of explosives, and a medical

clinic.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM DEMOBILIZATION SITE VISIT  
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13. (C) Embassy officials who attended the demobilization observed that this was the first time the Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) had been present at a demobilization since August 2005. This was at the request of President Uribe, who initially had decided to stop taking "version libres" during demobilizations in August because the environment did not permit detailed debriefings. However, with the promulgation of the new implementing decree making the taking of a "version libre" a process rather than a one-time event, Uribe ordered resumption of initial statements. (Since August, over 7,000 former combatants have demobilized without giving their "version libre.") A team of 17 prosecutors from the Fiscalia's Specialized National Units in Bogota -- antiterrorism, kidnapping, and money laundering -- attended the demobilization. There were also 10 investigators from the Fiscalia's Technical Investigation Unit (CTI) taking fingerprints, DNA samples, and photos. Additionally, the AUC leadership made available 10 lawyers to accompany individuals as they presented their initial "version libre." The "version libre" was the longer version recommended by the Embassy, which consisted of 16 questions including: alias, commanders' name(s), knowledge of any major criminal actions by the group, knowledge of any illicit assets, knowledge of any hostages, and any other information the individual would like to volunteer. Moreover, as part of the initial presentation of the version libre, each

individual signed a statement saying that he/she was voluntarily making the statement.

14. (U) The demobilization circuit included:

- Initial sign-in and verification of official troop list by the Peace Commissioner's Office
- Verification of national identity card ("cedula") by the National Civil Registry
- Criminal background check by Department of Administrative Security (DAS, FBI equivalent)
- Renunciation statement and request for legal processing under 782 with the Ministry of Interior and Justice (MOI/J)
- Registration for Reincorporation Program with MOI/J through assistance by OIM
- Verification by the Organization of American States Mission in Colombia
- Processing by the Fiscalia and CTI
- Arms and material identification and verification by Antiterrorism Interagency Group

15. (C) GOC officials announced that a Reference and Opportunities Center would be open in the zone to provide assistance to the demobilized. Moreover, representatives of the Catholic Church, ranchers, traders, industrialists, and professionals from the Mineros Bloc zone of influence formed a civic verification commission which will be checking that the two sides -- national government and former combatants -- fulfill their commitments.

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BACKGROUND ON VANROY AND HIS BLOC  
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16. (C) Vanoy was born in Yacopi, Cundinamarca Department on March 31, 1948. He worked for drug lord Pablo Escobar, but later joined the "Pepes" ("People Persecuted by Pablo Escobar") where he met the AUC Castano Gil brothers.

According to press reports, Vanoy bought his way into the AUC in 2002. Nevertheless, Vanoy has stated that he has been in the paramilitary forces for approximately 25-30 years. He claims to be connected with large landowners and cattlemen of the area and claimed he initially entered the AUC as protection for the area from guerrilla incursions and threats. Vanoy is suspected to have shipped drugs to Mexico and the United States. Most shipments were dispatched from a landing strip in Cauca, Antioquia Department, a territory he controlled until his demobilization. Since 1999, U.S. authorities have sought him for drug trafficking.

17. (C) Vanoy is believed to own several farms, hotels, restaurants, and homes. Authorities are investigating whether he is the owner of several gold mines. When asked why he decided to demobilize, Vanoy responded that the GOC was now showing commitment to and capability of protecting the area and it was time to "go home to our families." After demobilization he expects "assist" with the reintegration of his troops in the area of Cauca/Taraza and work with the communities "if the government will permit him." He spoke of productive projects for the future with "lands that the cattlemen would make available" and continuation of some of the community projects he helped established in the area.

18. (C) Vanoy's Mineros Bloc maintained a presence in Taraza, Cauca, and Caceres, as well as in other areas of the Lower Cauca, where it shared power with the Central Bolivar Bloc, under the command of Javier Montanez, AKA "Macaco," a structure that controlled coca cultivation over a broad area. Press reports indicate that some things are already changing in the area controlled for years by Vanoy. Inhabitants of

this region say that gasoline sales are down and the men no longer patrol in camouflage uniforms. (They also report that only six of 30 brothels remain open.) However, there is still a toll at El Alto where paramilitaries charge COP 5,000

per vehicle and control the entrance of unknown people. The group still reportedly controls 10 municipalities in the area close to the border with Cordoba Department, where about half of Antioquia's coca fields, about 5,000 hectares, and gold are found. Although fumigation has curbed coca growing, the area remains productive.

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FROM GROWERS TO ERADICATORS  
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19. (C) The backdrop for the demobilization of the Mineros Bloc is that the majority of people in the area made a living picking and selling coca leaf. Vanoy had been viewed as the "other authority" for more than 15 years. Mayor of Taraza Reinaldo Posso said there are some 2,000 hectares planted in Taraza alone, from which 30 percent of the estimated population of 43,000 derives its income. Although the illicit cultivation business in the zone is run by Vanoy, he has stated that "it is the government's problem, not mine. I have nothing to do with illicit crops." According to official data, the unemployment rate in the area is 20 percent.

10. (C) National Reinsertion Program Director Juan David Angel announced that the Mineros Bloc, one of the groups most involved in the coca business, will become manual eradicators of illicit crops in the area. The mayor's office and several large landowners in the region initiated a project, which is being implemented by the Rural Association of Rubber Farmers of Taraza, to encourage coca leaf pickers to harvest rubber instead of coca. Peasants in the area are hoping for crop substitution programs in rubber, cacao, and passion fruit. It is hoped that these projects not only benefit the demobilized, but also the region's peasants.

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SECURITY REMAINS A CONCERN  
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¶11. (C) Fabio Abella, political adviser to the Mineros Bloc, said the bloc was fully committed to peace, but insisted a security program with the communities was necessary because "otherwise, there is no sense in disarming some men, only to see another armed group come in." The demobilization process of the Mineros Bloc was initially affected by reports of the presence of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas in the area. According to Antioquia Government Secretary Jorge Mejia, FARC guerrillas are moving into the

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spaces vacated by the Mineros Bloc. Mejia added that this situation has already led to the displacement of 27 families from La Caucana to the municipal seat of Taraza. Despite these reports, General Oscar Gonzalez of the Army's 7th Division stated that there have been no official reports of incidents in the rural areas of Taraza. He did confirm, however, that troops had been reinforced in the area. According to the municipal human rights representative Jorge Eliecer Rocha, the situation in Taraza at the moment is no different from that of other towns in the days leading up to a demobilization. He further added that La Caucana was first dominated by the guerrillas and later by the self-defense groups. "It is only to be expected," he said, that now the FARC would want to recover the territory.

¶12. (C) Residents are fearful of what the FARC might do once all the Mineros Bloc members reintegrate back into society. Taraza Mayor Posso recommended that the Army pay special attention to the districts of Vista Hermosa and Colorado because some reports indicated that a guerrilla presence has already been detected. National, departmental, and local authorities spent the weekend visiting communities in Taraza and Caceres to explain the reinsertion process for demobilized combatants and the security plans to be

implemented in the region.

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ADDITIONAL BLOCS MOVING FORWARD ON DEMOBILIZATION  
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¶13. (U) Since the Mineros bloc demobilized, several other blocs have followed suit:

-- The remaining half of the Central Bolivar Bloc, 2,520 members, disarmed;

-- Self Defense Forces of Puerto Boyaca in Buena Vista, Bolivar demobilized 742 members;

-- Tayrona Resistance Bloc demobilized 1,166 members;

-- Middle Magdalena Bloc disarmed 1,000 members. Demobilizing Middle Magdalena Bloc members, the AUC's oldest bloc, turned in 754 weapons and 15 vehicles during the demobilization ceremony in Puerto Triunfo, Magdalena Department.

These demobilizations bring the total number of demobilized fighters to 22,295.

WOOD

=====CABLE ENDS=====